

MINUTES
LANCASTER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
DEPARTMENTAL BUDGET HEARINGS
MEETING ROOM 106
FIRST FLOOR, COUNTY-CITY BUILDING
TUESDAY, JUNE 9, 1998
8:00 - 10:00 A.M.

Commissioners Present: Linda Steinman, Chair
Kathy Campbell
Larry Hudkins

Commissioners Absent: Steve Svoboda
Darlene Tussing

Others Present: Kerry Eagan, Chief Administrative Officer
Dave Kroeker, Budget & Fiscal Officer
Ann Taylor, County Clerk's Office

JUVENILE COURT/PROBATION - Juvenile Court Judge Tom Dawson; Leslie Greunke, Bailiff; Bill Janike, Chief Probation Officer

Dave Kroeker, Budget & Fiscal Officer, projected an amount of \$568,000 for Legal Fees (3052) and \$568,000 for Boarding Contracts (3060) expenditures for Juvenile Court in FY 1999.

Juvenile Court Judge Tom Dawson stated that the increase in costs for legal fees can be attributed to:

Increased number of case filings
Increased number of motions to terminate parental rights

Judge Dawson also reported increases in the categories of Postage (3251) and Duplicating Machine Rental (3606), due to the increased number of filings.

Judge Dawson indicated that there is a false ceiling on boarding contract costs, based on placement availability. He noted that as a result, there is increased pressure on the Attention Center for Youth to provide space, impacting their costs.

In response to a question from Steinman, Bill Janike, Chief Probation Officer, reported that the \$105,000 amount for Other Contracted Services (3076) in the Juvenile Probation Budget covers the Electronic Monitoring and Tracker programs. He noted that Juvenile Probation will be receiving approximately \$35,000 in federal grant funds for the Tracker Program which will reduce the budget request by approximately \$20,000 to \$25,000.

Janike also indicated that the cost of a second Probation Officer was not included in the Juvenile Probation budget.

Campbell noted that the addition of a second probation officer was a recommendation of Chinn Planning, Inc. in the Juvenile Justice System Three Phase Needs Assessment Study.

Dawson noted that the Chinn's recommendation was for a probation officer to work directly with youth in an attempt to lower the number of probation revocations.

In response to a question from Campbell, Judge Dawson projected more juvenile court case filings, including motions to revoke probation, in Lancaster County than Douglas County. He also reported that Lancaster had more criminal cases filed last year than Douglas County.

Janike noted that Douglas County is more inclined to prosecute 16 and 17 year old youths in the adult, rather than the juvenile, court systems. He also noted that elimination of the Youth Aid Bureau and establishment of the Diversion Program also had a significant impact on the number of juvenile court case filings. Janike stated that a number of minor law violations that were previously screened out are now being referred for prosecution in Juvenile Court.

In response to a question from Campbell, Janike stated that the Youth Aid Bureau currently serves only youth under 12 and 3A cases.

Judge Dawson noted that Douglas County has a pre-trial diversion program which is less restrictive than Lancaster County's.

In response to a question from Campbell, Judge Dawson stated that it is still difficult to determine whether youth previously served by the Youth Aid Bureau can be screened out by the Teen Peer Court and the Juvenile Pre-Trial Diversion programs, as the recidivism rate has not yet been determined.

Janike noted that there is a tendency to hold Pre-Trial Diversion youth more accountable, resulting in more revocation of probation filings.

In proceeding with the budget, Judge Dawson suggested that interpreter fees be listed as a separate line item for better tracking.

Judge Dawson reported that LB1041, which changes children-related provisions and conforms state law to the federal Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997, will have a significant impact on the Juvenile Court budget. He noted that there is only an 18 month time frame in which to hear the existing 180-200 cases which meet the criteria for filing of termination of parental rights.

Judge Dawson noted that visiting judges, paid for by the State, will be brought in to handle the daily caseload in Juvenile Court, but a small temporary courtroom will need to be made available in Trabert Hall.

Judge Dawson also noted that almost all termination of parental rights cases are appealed, resulting in additional costs.

Hudkins asked what criteria is used in determining indigency.

Judge Dawson stated that the judges look at income, but do not have sufficient resources to verify the information.

Steinman noted that this is one of the duties that could be assigned to a Court Administrator position.

The Board requested that reimbursement of legal costs by families, determined by the Court to have an income level sufficient to pay for those fees, be identified through the Clerk of the District Court's budget.

In response to a question from Kroeker, Judge Dawson stated that the \$576,000 budgeted for Legal Fees (3052) will probably need to be increased. He noted that an additional legal service contract would be beneficial in assigning conflict of interest cases.

AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY - Rodney Hollman, Lancaster County Agricultural Society President

Rodney Hollman, Lancaster County Agricultural Society President, briefly reviewed the FY 1997-1998 Budget for the Lancaster County Agricultural Society, noting that the FY 1998-99 budget is not completed.

Hollman reported that the Agricultural Society plans to levy the full amount allowable by law this year. He stated that the Agricultural Society did not levy the full amount allowable in the past, because it was not necessary, but will need to this year due to planned construction of an Events Center.

Hollman briefly reported on selection of a site at 84th & Havelock Avenue for location of the Events Center, noting that a national search will be conducted for a manager for the facility. He stated that the position was partially budgeted for in this year's budget.

Hudkins asked what the maximum levy for the next year would be.

Kroeker stated that if the Agricultural Society levied 14 hundredths of a cent it would net approximately \$140,000. He stated, however, that that levy amount may not meet the lid restrictions of LB989, which allows a two and one half percent increase, with an additional one percent increase allowable if supported by 75 percent of the Agricultural Society Board Members.

In response to a question from Hudkins, Hollman stated that the cost of holding a County Fair is approximately \$200,000. He noted that the Agricultural Society is changing its philosophy and seeking additional funding through sponsorships.

Hudkins asked what would happen to the Agricultural Society's investment in the Lancaster Building if the County fairgrounds is moved to the Events Center site.

Hollman stated that an agreement for the State Fair to pay back some funds for use of the Lancaster Building and arena is still in effect, although funds may not be available.

Hudkins suggested that the Agricultural Society consider withholding funds for maintenance to recoup some of those residual funds.

Hudkins also suggested that the Agricultural Society might receive a greater return on investments if utilizing the Nebraska Public Agency Investment Trust (NPAIT).

VISITORS PROMOTION - Michael Carpenter, Lincoln Convention & Visitors Bureau Director; Paul McCue, Chamber of Commerce President

Michael Carpenter, Lincoln Convention & Visitors Bureau Director, briefly reviewed the Lincoln Convention and Visitors Bureau Budget Worksheet FY 1998/1999, Lincoln Convention and Visitors Bureau Account Definitions FY 1998/1999 and Lincoln Convention Visitors Bureau Preliminary Budget July 1998 - June 1999 (Exhibit A), noting a four percent increase in lodging tax revenues and a five percent overall reduction in expenses over last year.

Carpenter noted that the Lincoln Convention & Visitors Bureau is now budgeting on a monthly basis and will begin budgeting on an accrual basis as of July 1, 1998.

In response to a question from Kroeker, Carpenter stated that the funds requested on a monthly basis are a 1/12th percentage of the total budget request.

Kroeker asked how bills are handled if expenses are in excess of the monthly revenue amount.

Carpenter stated that expenses only exceed anticipated revenue for five of the twelve months in the fiscal year.

Paul McCue, Chamber of Commerce President, noted that, as in the past, the Chamber of Commerce will provide cash flow assistance to the Lincoln Convention & Visitors Bureau for the first few months of the year.

Carpenter reported the following significant changes to the budget:

16% increase in salaries to reflect actual cost incurred by the service team and to correct severe disparity between some positions

20% increase in postage costs related to an intensified sales development program

60% increase in advertising costs related to a local and regional marketing plan

20% reduction in trade association dues

45% reduction in professional fees

Carpenter reported that new budget line items include:

Online expenses including host servers, e-mail, web design and updating

A referral/incentive fund to bring meetings/conventions to Lincoln (Could also serve as "seed money" for new projects or activities)

Auto mileage

Carpenter noted that there was a discrepancy of \$108,000 in anticipated revenue for FY 1997-1998 and a number of outstanding bills when he assumed directorship of the Lincoln Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB). He stated that monthly expenses were reduced and he is confident that the CVB will be a break even point by the end of the fiscal year.

In response to a question from Kroeker, Carpenter stated that the budgeted funds will be for the contract only. He noted that it was the recommendation of the Visitors & Promotion Advisory Committee that grants now be funded through excess funds, rather than a Contingency Fund. Carpenter stated that any group receiving direct financial assistance must proceed with the grant application process.

Kroeker stated the funds in excess of the budget can not be spent without amending the budget at a public hearing. He recommended that an additional \$30,000 be included in the budget.

The Board concurred with Kroeker's suggestion.

Eagan stated that the contract for the Lincoln Convention & Visitors Bureau and the Chamber of Commerce needs to be amended to include shared receptionist duties.

There being no further business, the meeting ended.

NOTE: Budget documents discussed in the hearings are located in the Lancaster County Proposed Budget FY 1998-1999 (On file in the County Clerk's office.)